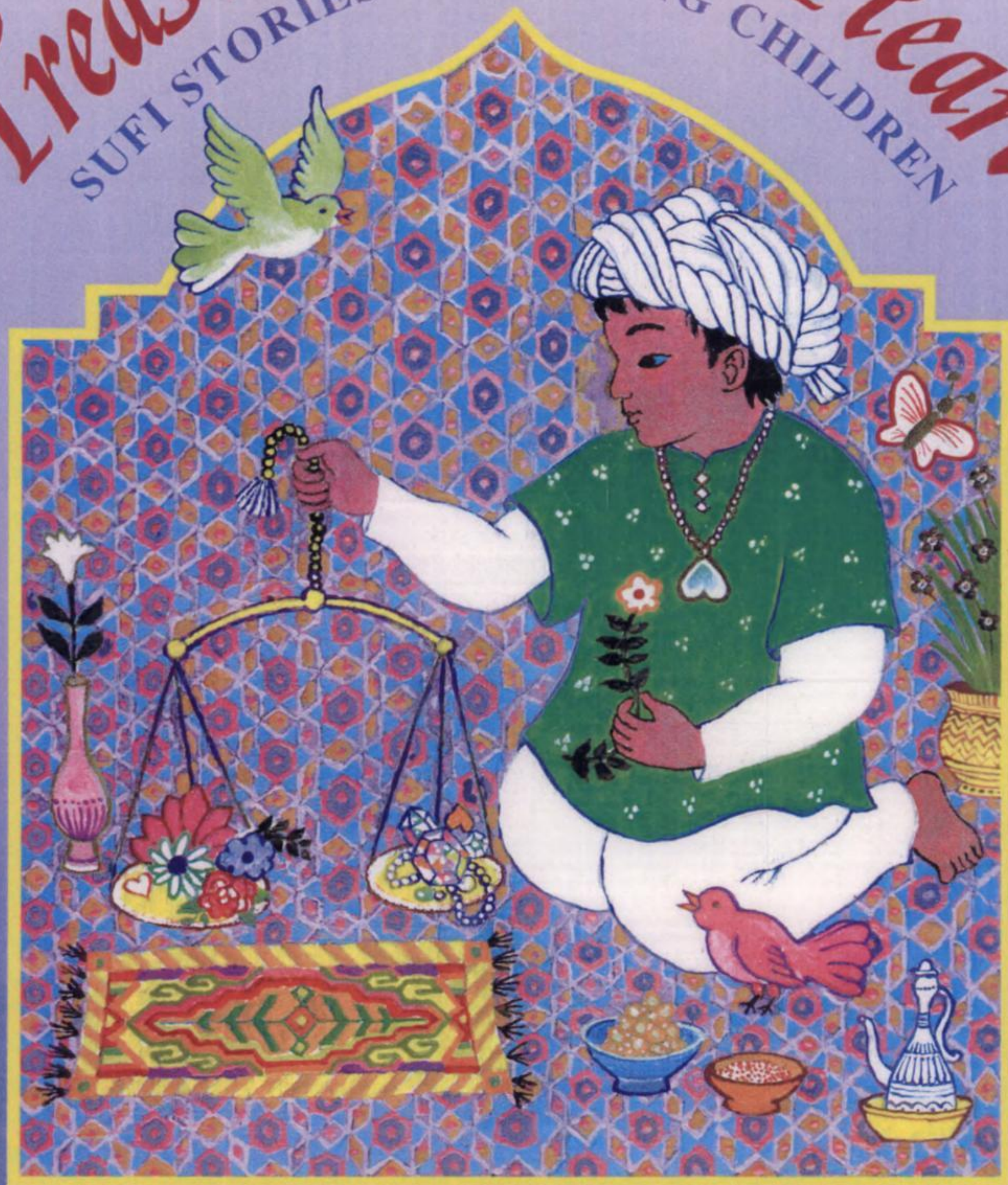


Treasures of the Heart

SUFI STORIES FOR YOUNG CHILDREN



by M. R. Bawa Muhaiyaddeen



Treasures of the Heart



**SUFI STORIES FOR
YOUNG CHILDREN**

by

M. R. Bawa Muhaiyaddeen (Ral.)



THE FELLOWSHIP PRESS

Philadelphia, PA

This One



9HJ9-FKN-SE7P

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5820 Overbrook Avenue
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19131

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Muhaiyaddeen, M. R. Bawa.

Treasures of the heart: Sufi stories for young children / by M. R. Bawa
Muhaiyaddeen.

p. cm.

Summary: Includes seven short stories by a Sufi mystic meant to teach children
lessons about good behavior and respect for others.

ISBN 0-914390-33-3

[1. Sufism—Juvenile literature. 2. Sufism. 3. Parables.

4. Conduct of life.] I. Title.

BP189.62.M628 1992

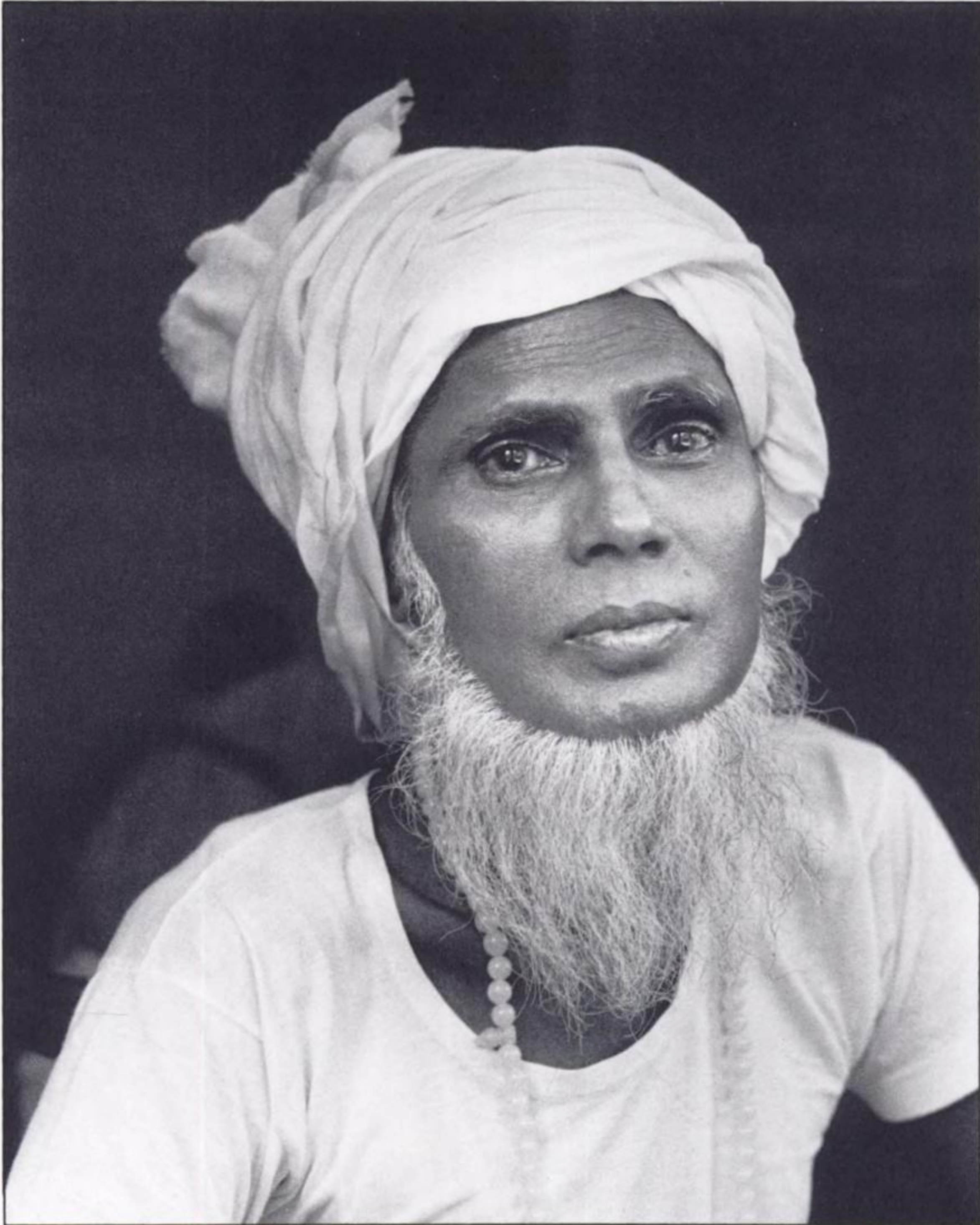
297'.44—dc20

92-32131

CIP

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Printed in the United States of America
by the Bawa Muhaiyaddeen Fellowship
First Printing



Muhammad Raheem Bawa Muhaiyaddeen (*Ral.*)

Acknowledgements

The stories in this book were originally told in Tamil by M.R. Bawa Muhaiyaddeen. They were translated by Dr. M. Z. Markar and Ms. Usha Balamore and adapted by Mrs. Christine Steele. We would like to thank the many artists who contributed their work and all the volunteers who helped compile and prepare this book. We humbly ask God's forgiveness for any errors we may have made.

Editor's Note

Muhammad Raheem Bawa Muhaiyaddeen, may God be pleased with him, was a revered Sufi mystic first discovered in the jungles of Sri Lanka at the beginning of this century. In 1971 he was invited to the United States, and until his death in 1986, he traveled throughout the United States, Canada, England, and Sri Lanka, tirelessly answering the many personal and spiritual questions people brought to him.

The name 'Muhaiyaddeen' means 'the giver of life to the true belief', and indeed Bawa Muhaiyaddeen spent his life awakening and strengthening people's faith in God. The word 'bawa' means 'father', and Bawa Muhaiyaddeen saw his relationship with those who came for his guidance as a life-long responsibility and lovingly addressed them as his 'children'. He also spent a great deal of time with the young 'grandchildren'. Two of his last major publications (*My Love You, My Children: 101 Stories for Children of all Ages* and *Come to the Secret Garden: Sufi Tales of Wisdom*) were large collections of short stories meant to aid parents in teaching the strong moral values needed to guide children in today's world. *Treasures of the Heart: Sufi Stories for Young Children*, his second book to be published posthumously, was given specifically for his 'grandchildren'. The stories have been illustrated, edited, and adapted to capture the animated manner in which they were told.

To the young children, Bawa Muhaiyaddeen was the archetypal grandfather, embracing them with unconditional love, giving them

candy, and telling them stories full of wisdom. Although his native language was Tamil, when talking to the children he would often say in English, "My love you." This he preferred to the grammatically correct usage, "I love you," because in true love there is no room for the ego of the I; there can only be the free giving of the innermost heart. This book is just such a gift.

Table of Contents

<i>Editor's Note</i>	<i>i</i>
<i>A Letter to My Children</i> <u>by M. R. Bawa Muhaiyaddeen</u>	<i>1</i>
<i>Words of Wisdom</i> <u>Illustrated by Ishaq Deis</u>	<i>5</i>
<i>The Carrot Perks Up</i> <u>Illustrated by Bob Barnett</u>	<i>29</i>
<i>The Treasures Within</i> <u>Illustrated by Kadir Cannon</u>	<i>37</i>
<i>Always Be Grateful</i> <u>Illustrated by Chrissy Steele</u>	<i>49</i>
<i>The Wise Apple Tree</i> <u>Illustrated by Rabia Schiers</u>	<i>71</i>
<i>The Peaceful Cows</i> <u>Illustrated by Manuel Da Costa</u>	<i>81</i>
<i>The Rose of the Heart</i> <u>Illustrated by John Barnett</u>	<i>89</i>



A Letter to My Children

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Compassionate.

May the unfathomable Ruler of grace, the One who is incomparable love, protect all my loving children, my babies, my children who are yet to be born, my little children, and my older children. May Allah protect you, your parents, your grandparents, and their parents. May He grant all of you health and long lives free of illness. May He bless you with His undiminishing wealth in the three worlds (the world of the souls before creation, this world, and the hereafter).

Jeweled lights of my eyes, my children, you are the happiness within my happiness, the heart within my heart, the wisdom within my wisdom, and the love within my love. You are the children God has given me. You are my very own children, my beautiful and wise children. I am constantly praying to God on your behalf. I am praying to God that all of you live in a state of goodness day and night, on the inside and on the outside, in darkness and in light, in happiness and in sadness. I am praying to God that He grant you His peace in the world of the souls, in this world, and in the next world. I am praying that all of you reach the state of peace in which you separate from yourselves all the qualities that divide you from one another. I am praying that God grant you that state of unity with His grace.

Jeweled lights of my eyes, my very own babies, God, the Mighty Emperor of the eighteen thousand universes, has created everything. There is nothing that He has not created. He has created all the heavens, all the hells, the land, the sky, the oceans, the sun, moon, and stars, the trees, the bushes, the fish, the animals, the insects, the jinns, the fairies, all the angels, the prophets, and human beings.

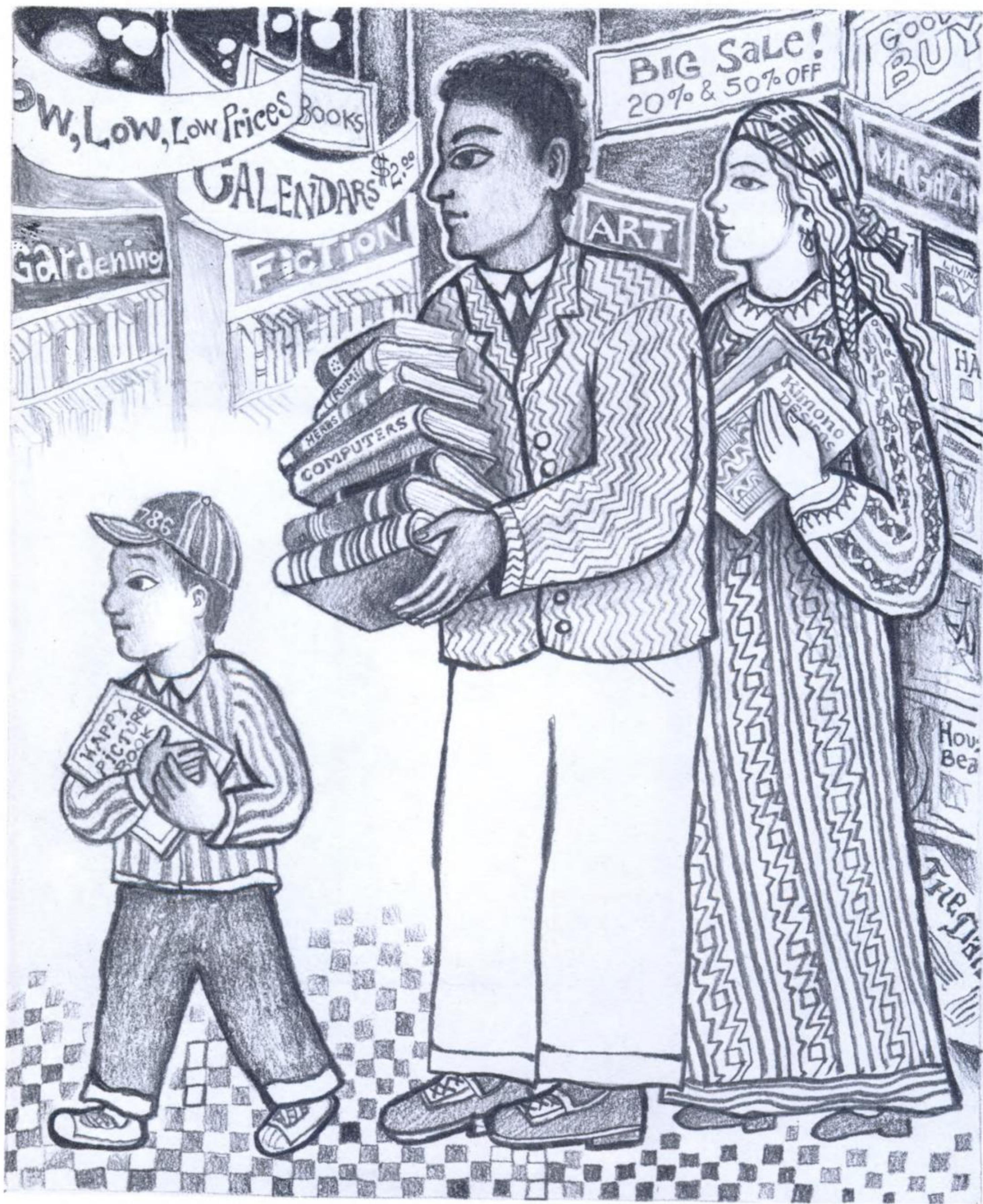
God has created everything, and He has created the human being as His best creation. He has placed all of His creations within man; He has placed everything within man, all good and all evil. The duty of man is to discard what is bad and keep what is good.

Jeweled lights of my eyes, my children, my loving children, when you have God's qualities, I am happy. God's qualities are like drops of a soft spring rain falling into your hearts, causing everything in your hearts to become green and fragrant. When you do not act with God's qualities, your hearts become dry and parched like a desert, and all the green turns brown. I am constantly praying that all my children act with God's qualities.

O God, You must come to give my children Your grace. Please come to fulfill all the needs of my babies. O God, You must come here now to give my babies Your grace so that they may reach the shore. Please give all my children the faith to search for You forever. Please protect my babies and let them merge with You. Please destroy all of their torpor, all of their illusion (*māyā*), and all of the veils that conceal Your grace from them.

O God, may You bless my children with Your beauty, so that they may worship You. Give them Your good qualities, so that they may do their duty. Give them modesty, so that they may overcome the fascination of torpor, give them peace of mind so that they may overcome illusion (*māyā*), and give them the remembrance to always pray, so that they may rise above both happiness and sadness. Give all my children Your grace and Your protection forever. *Āmīn*.







Words of Wisdom

My grandchildren, once upon a time a little boy named Yusef went to the bookstore with his parents. His father needed some school books, some law books, and other books to help him find a job. His mother wanted to buy some books which offered important explanations about life.

Yusef and his parents looked on every shelf in the store and finally chose some very beautiful books, which contained a lot of wisdom. Of course these books cost a great deal of money, but Yusef's parents didn't mind, because the books would help them improve their lives.

Yusef and his parents carried the new books home and placed them on the table.

“You must only look at these books with Daddy or me,” instructed his mother. “They cost ten to twenty dollars each and are very special.”

“Okay, Mommy,” said Yusef. He was a very good boy and always tried hard to do what his mother told him.





But one day when his parents were outside, he decided to look at the books by himself. He took one of them from the table and flipped through the pages. He liked some of the pictures so much that he started tearing them out of the book, so that he could save them. Then he tore out some of the other pages which he squeezed into paper balls and bounced off the walls. Finally, he flung the book aside and started to leave the room.

“Little child, come here!” a gentle voice called.

Yusef was surprised to hear someone speak to him. He ran to hide, then slowly peeked out to see who was there.



“Who’s talking to me?” he asked, since he couldn’t see anyone.

“Why did you tear me up?” asked the voice. It was the torn book speaking from the corner where it had been thrown!





“This is not what a human being should do,” explained the book. “You were not thinking. You must understand what my purpose is. Your parents need to read and think about each word that is written in me. Then they can use what they learn to help them in their work, in their lives, and in their understanding of God and themselves. That is why there are books like me. If you tear me up, you are really hurting your parents, because they will not be able to gain the wisdom they need to make their lives better.



“Because you are a child, your parents take care of you and buy everything you need,” the book continued. “They buy your food, your clothes, and your toys. If you waste your parents’ money by tearing up their books, they won’t have enough money to buy the things you need. So when you destroy me, you are also hurting yourself.”

“Yes, I see what you mean,” said Yusef, as he came closer to the book. “I wasn’t thinking.”

The book looked lovingly at him and said, “Well, next time think before you act. From now on, use books in a good way. When you want to see a book, first ask your parents. Say, ‘Mommy, Daddy, please teach me everything in this book. Teach me wisdom and good conduct.’ After they give their permission, read the book and learn. If you study in this way, you will do well in life. But if you tear me up, you will hurt your parents and yourself. Please don’t ever do such a thing again!”



“Yes, I understand,” said Yusef. “I’m really sorry I hurt you.” He picked up all the paper balls that he had scattered around the room. Then he looked thoughtfully at the book he had torn and wondered how he could replace it.





When his parents returned, Yusef told them everything that had happened and described his plan to replace the torn book. He and his father went to each of the neighbors' houses and made a list of all the little jobs they wanted done. Yusef worked every day after school and by the end of the week he had enough money to buy a new copy of the book. He ran to the store to purchase it, then happily presented it to his parents.

“Mommy! Daddy! I have really learned the value of books,” he said. “From now on, I will only look at books with your permission. And when you give me a book, I’ll keep it clean and protect it. Then, when I’m finished reading it, I can share it with someone else.”



Grandchildren, like this, you should take care of the things your parents give you. Never cause trouble to your parents. Don't ever tell lies, hurt other children or their books, or take other people's things. Take good care of the books, papers, pencils, and pens you have been given. You should never throw these things around in school. Why? Because you will need them for your study of wisdom. When class starts, you won't have time to look around for your pen, pencil, or books—you will need them immediately.

My loving grandchildren, your life must be conducted in a way that won't hurt anyone else. You must have good qualities and good actions. Learn wisdom and good conduct. Never get angry. Instead, live together in unity with everyone, serving mankind with love and affection. That is how a good child should be.

My love you. Please learn to be like this.







The Carrot Perks Up

My precious little grandchildren, let me tell you a story.

Once upon a time a little child named Sarah was playing in the family vegetable garden. She was running up and down the rows, while her parents watered the young plants. When she got to the row of carrots, she stopped suddenly, yanked out one of the carrots by its feathery green top, and threw it up into the air.



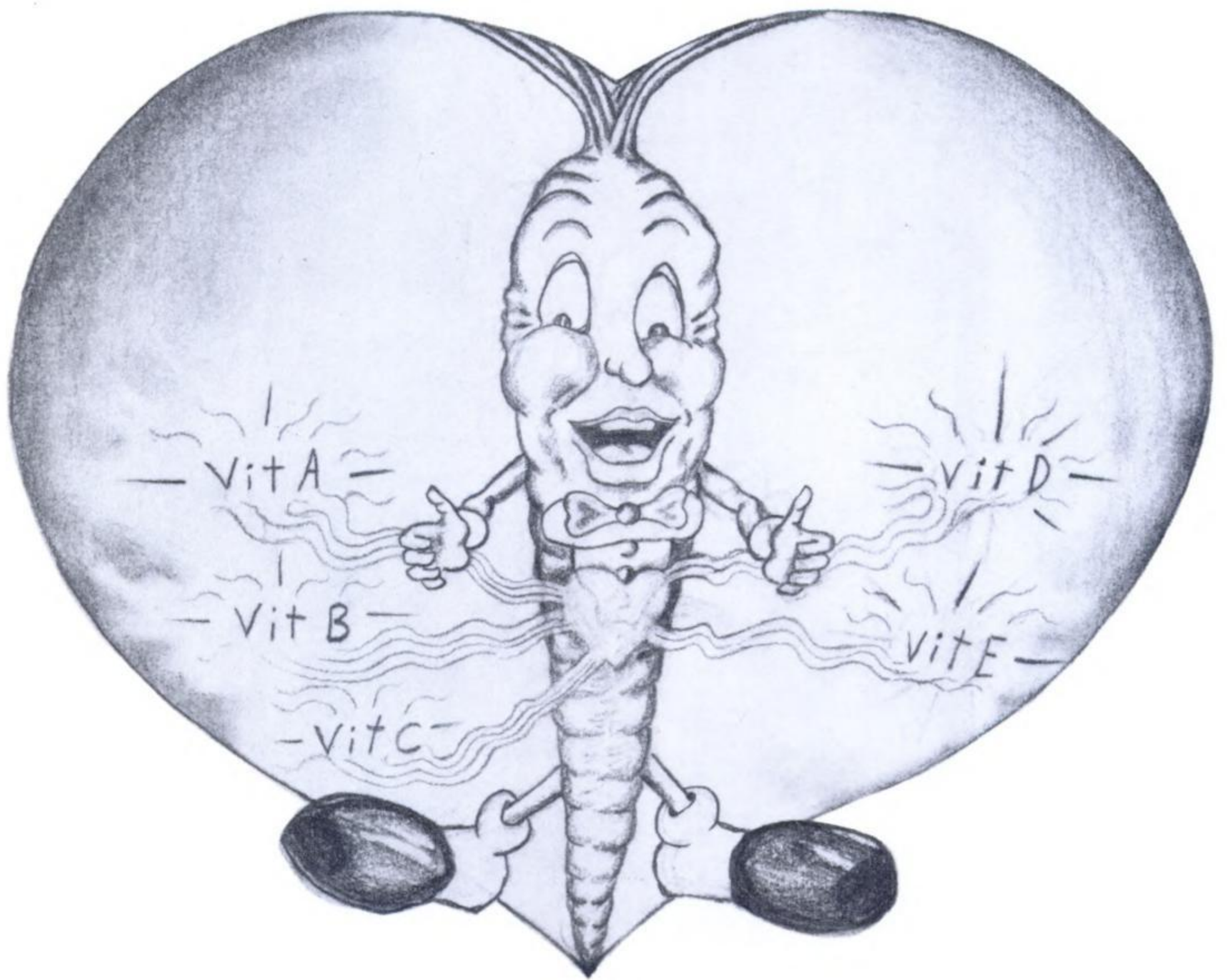
“Eeeeeeeee!” Sarah heard the carrot scream as it flew through the air and fell to the ground. She ran over to the carrot and found it lying limp, with its green top drooping and sad.

“Oh little child, what have you done to me?” said the poor carrot. “Why would you want to hurt me, when we are so much alike? You are a baby and I am also a baby. The parents who



are raising you are also raising me. Just as they give you milk, feed you, and look after you, they give me water, put fertilizer on me, and look after me. Do you know why your parents are taking such good care of me?" asked the carrot.

"Yes," said Sarah. "They want you to grow really big so I can have a big juicy carrot for supper!"



“That’s right,” said the carrot. “I have vitamins A, B, C, D, and E in me. If you eat me you will get all those good vitamins. I can help you to grow very quickly, and I can make you big and strong.

“I am also very sweet,” the carrot continued, “so you don’t need any candy when I’m around. All the sugar in candy is not healthy for you and can make you ill. But I will never make you sick.

“Please think about this, and take good care of me until I grow up. Then I will be of great service to you and your parents. Little child, you must listen to what your parents say. You should not hurt your parents and you should not destroy the plants that they are growing. They planted things that will be good for you. If you pull me out now and throw me away, neither you nor your parents will gain anything. I will not be able to help you.”

“Okay, little carrot,” said Sarah. “From now on, when my parents plant the vegetables, I will help take care of them. Then later on at harvest time, we can all eat the vegetables and grow strong together! Don’t worry, little carrot. I won’t destroy you. I won’t ever pull you out and throw you away again.”

Then Sarah decided to replant the carrot. She poked a hole in the dirt with her chubby little finger and lovingly placed the carrot in the ground. She gently patted the earth all around it and then sat back, feeling very happy.

“Mommy, let me water the vegetables,” Sarah called out, as she ran to fetch the watering can. It was full to the top, and it took all her strength to carry it.

First she went to her little carrot and gave it a big, wet drink. The wilted carrot perked right up. Then she watered all the other vegetables until the can was empty.

“Mommy! Daddy! I’m going to help you in the garden tomorrow, too,” Sarah promised as she ran to help her parents put the tools in the shed. The work was done for the day.

“Goodbye garden! Goodbye carrot!” Sarah waved to her little friend, and the carrot fluttered a leafy farewell in the warm, dancing breeze.







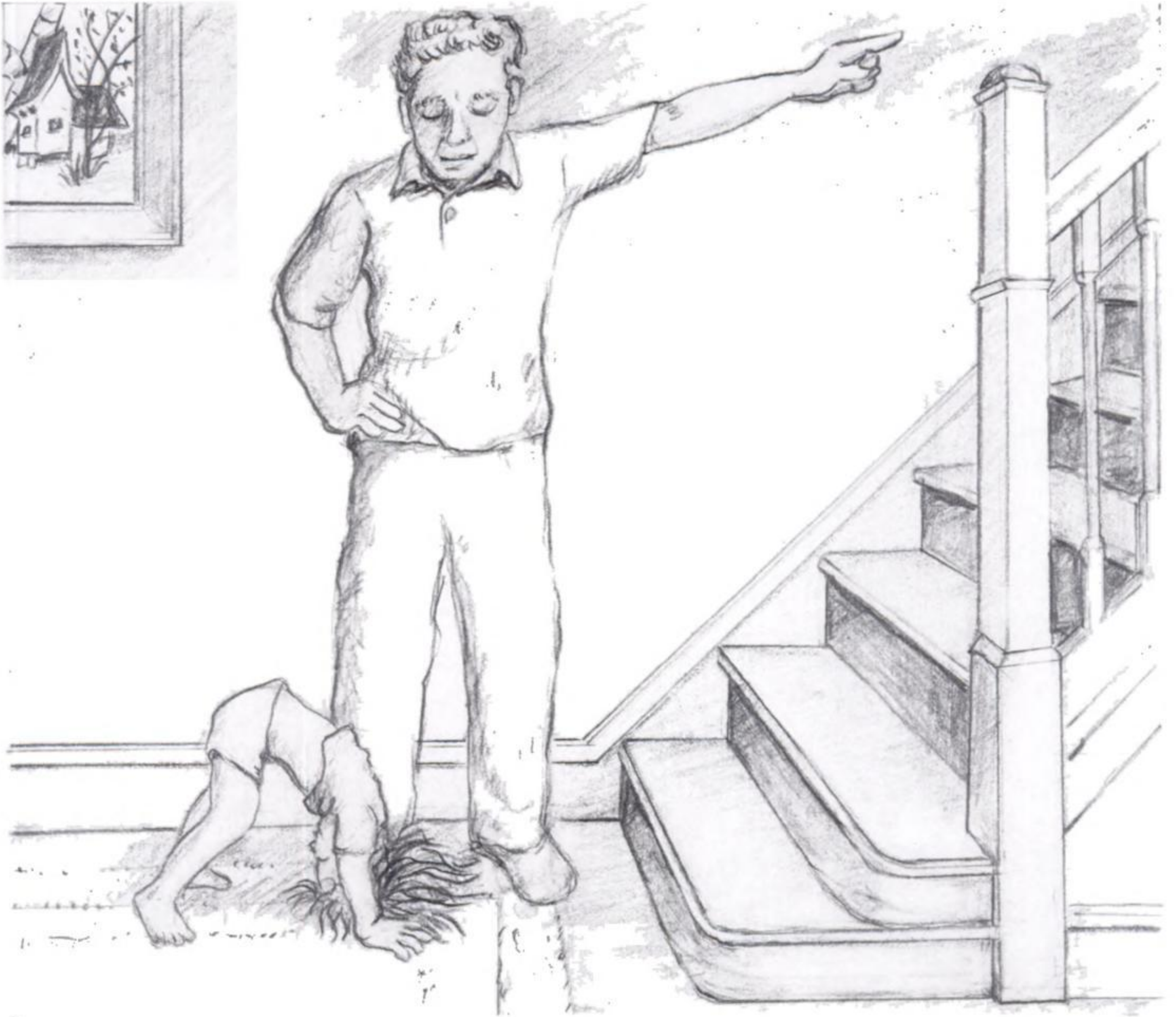
The Treasures Within

My love you, my grandchildren, my little daughters and little sons. I am going to tell you a story.

Once upon a time there were three children who liked to play. Kabira, who was the oldest, liked to jump. The next oldest, Maryam, liked to roll. Then there was baby Lateef. He liked to crawl and put everything into his mouth and say, "Cooooooo!" They lived with their mother and father in a little white house on top of a hill.



They were very good and very sweet children. But whenever their mother asked them to get ready for dinner, or whenever their father asked them to get ready for bed, do you think they would listen? Do you think they would do what they were told? Oh no!



Kabira would jump about like a bunny, and Maryam would roll like a steamroller, and baby Lateef would crawl around and put anything he could into his mouth and say, "Cooooooo!" Did that make their mother and father happy? Oh no!

One day Kabira said, "What shall we play?"

"I don't know," said Maryam.

"Coooooooo!" said baby Lateef, putting a truck into his mouth.

"I know," said Kabira. "Let's dig in the dirt!" They all liked that idea, so she picked up baby Lateef and off they ran to their special pile of dirt.

The children dove right into the earth and started shoveling it into mounds. They tossed it into the air and dumped it on their heads. Then they rolled in the dirt and kicked it all around.

Now all this time, the dirt was secretly watching the children at play. But only Lateef saw the dirt's big eyes looking at them. "Coooooooo!" he said.

"Who are you talking to, Lateef?" asked Maryam.

"He's talking to the dirt!" laughed Kabira.





“Cooooooo!” said Lateef, and he pointed to the earthy brown face.

“My love you, children,” said the dirt in a gravelly voice. “I’m very happy to see you playing with me. You’re having lots of fun, aren’t you?”

The children nodded their heads slowly.

“Well, then,” said the dirt. “Let me tell you a secret. I am just earth, but I have many valuable treasures hidden inside me, like gems and gold and silver. You’re having fun playing with my outer layer of dirt, but it would be much better if you could find the precious riches deep inside.”

The children listened in silence as the earth continued. “Your parents are just like me! They are fun to play with on the outside, and they have valuable riches inside, too! Your life would be much happier if you could find those precious treasures.”

“What treasures?” asked Maryam. “Do you mean Mommy and Daddy have gold and diamonds inside their tummies?”

“No, no,” laughed the dirt. “Your parents have a different kind of treasure. They have the beautiful qualities of wisdom, patience, inner patience, contentment, and trust in God. If you look carefully, you will find those treasures. You will also find good conduct and the quality of loving other lives as much as they love their own lives.

“I only have gems and gold and silver within me,” said the earth, “but within your parents are God’s precious qualities. Those qualities can show you how to find freedom for your soul. So you should love your parents and have much, much more affection for them than you have for me. Children, within your parents are the priceless treasures of God’s grace. It is very important to try to find those treasures.

“How can we do that?” asked Kabira, who loved treasures.

“First of all,” said the dirt, “you should love your parents as much as they love you. You know, children, your mother carried you inside her own body for ten lunar months. You were very happy there. When you came out into the world, she fed you with her milk and took very good care of you. So you must care for her in the same way that she cares for you. Don’t hurt your mother. Instead, play with her lovingly, with lots of patience and compassion.

“Secondly, you should always pay attention to your parents when they speak to you. Listen carefully to their words of wisdom and advice. Then you can get those valuable treasures from your parents, and you can be very, very happy.”

The children could hardly wait to hunt for those treasures.

“Let’s go tell Mommy and Daddy what the dirt said!” exclaimed Kabira, jumping up and down.



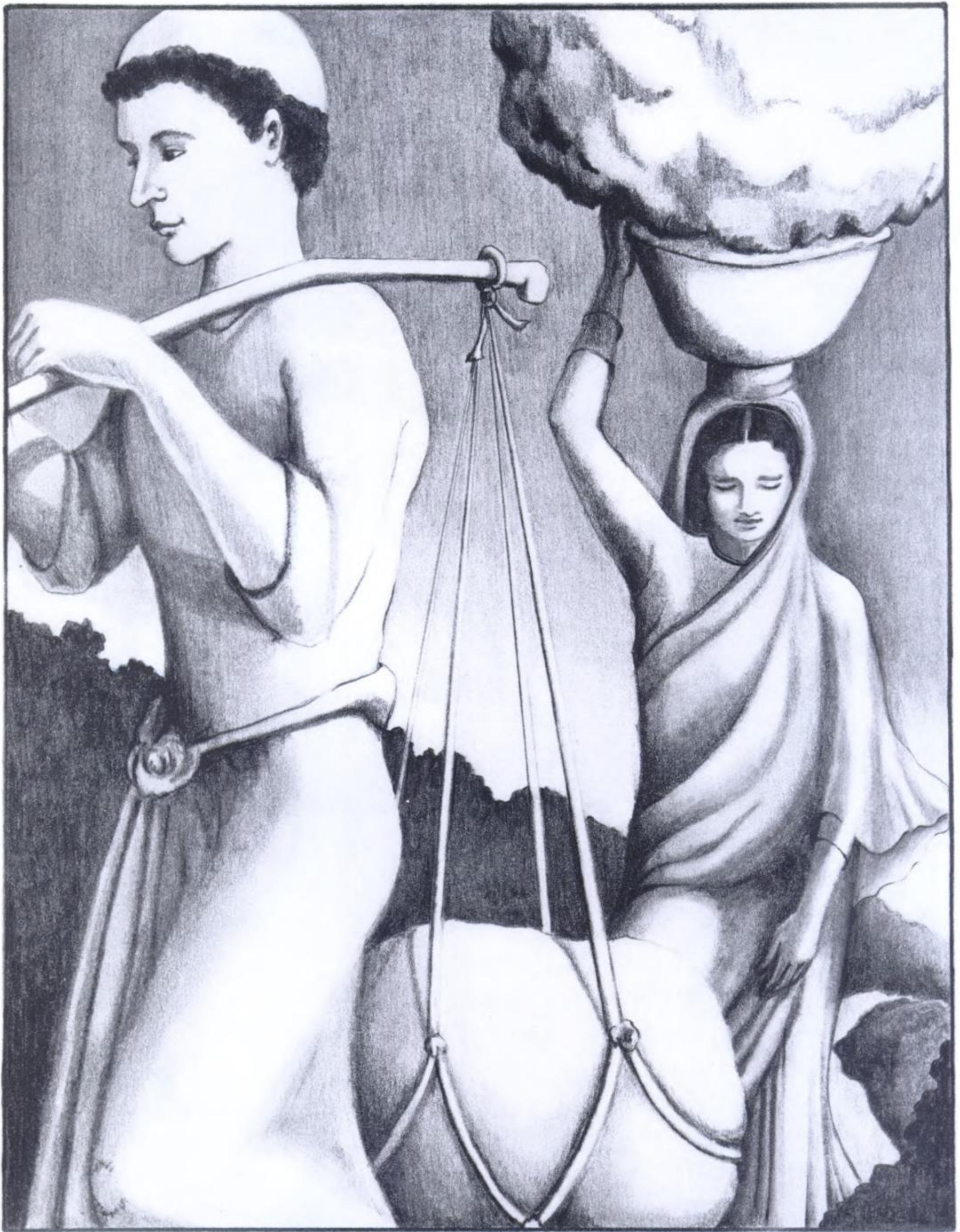
“Okay! Come on Lateef!” said Maryam. She rolled over to the baby and scooped him up.

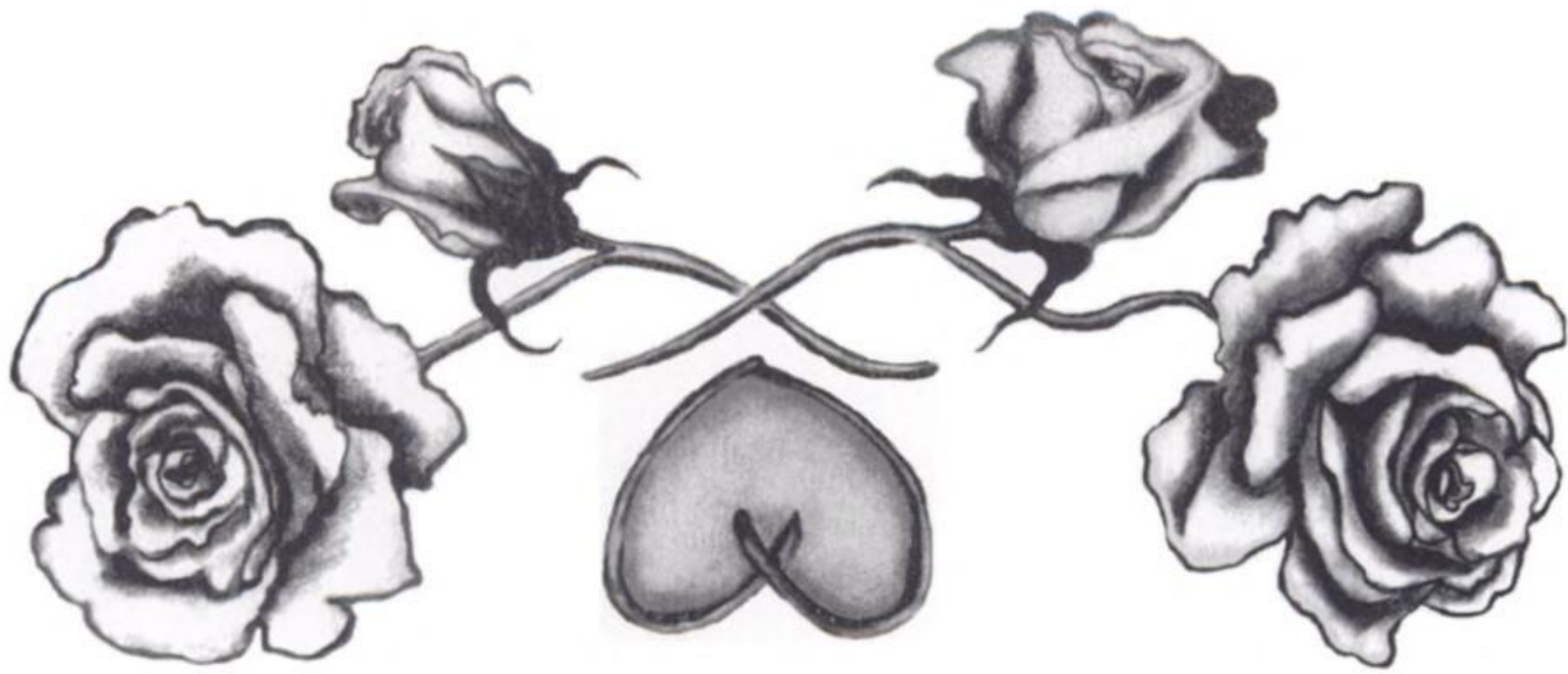
“Coooooooo!” said Lateef as he stuffed a handful of grass into his mouth.

The dirt smiled as the children ran up the hill. Then it closed its rocky eyes and went to sleep.

My love you, my grandchildren. Think about this story. I lovingly ask you to act as the earth instructed these children.







Always Be Grateful

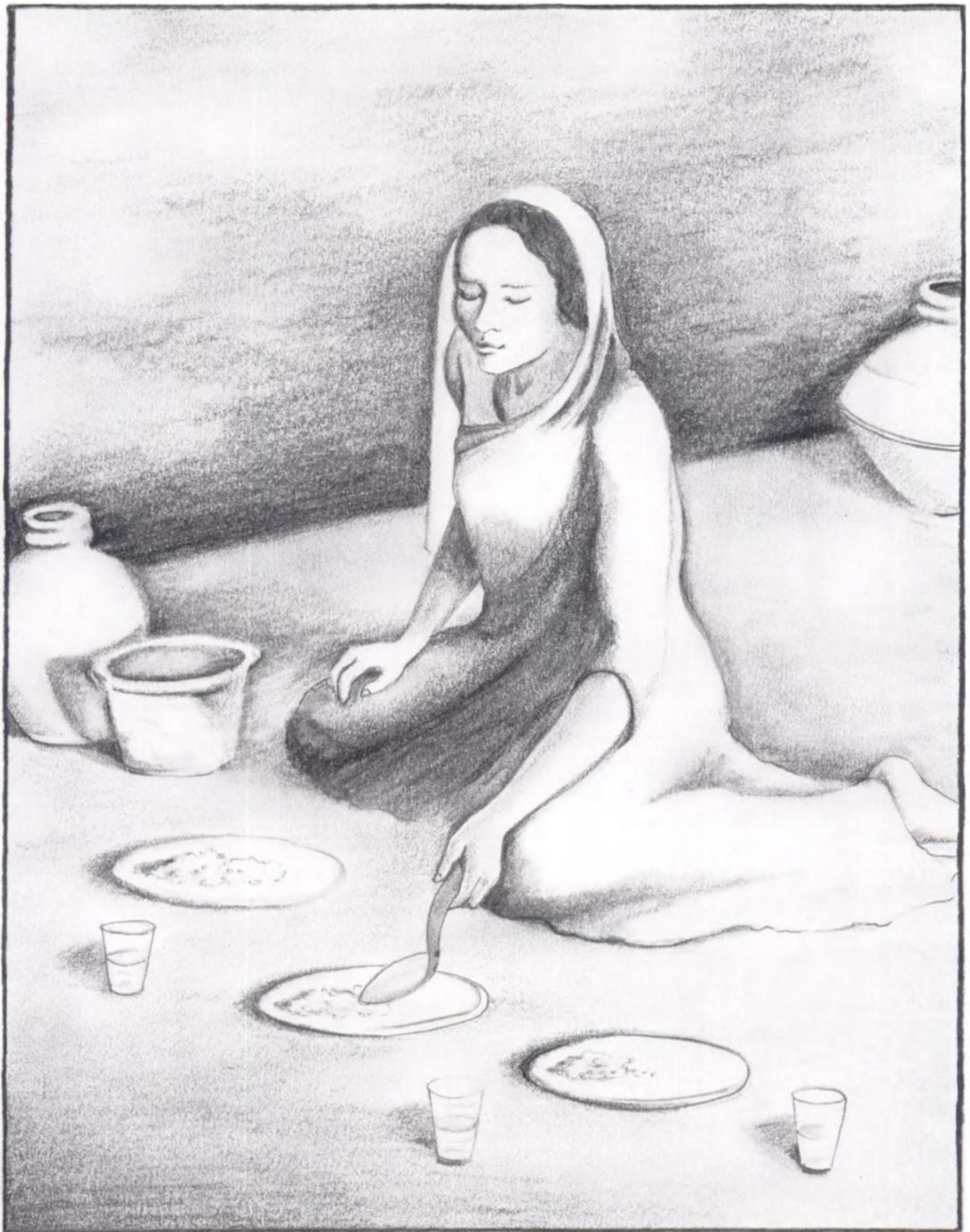
My little grandchildren, my love you. I would like to tell you a story. It contains some very important points, so please listen carefully.

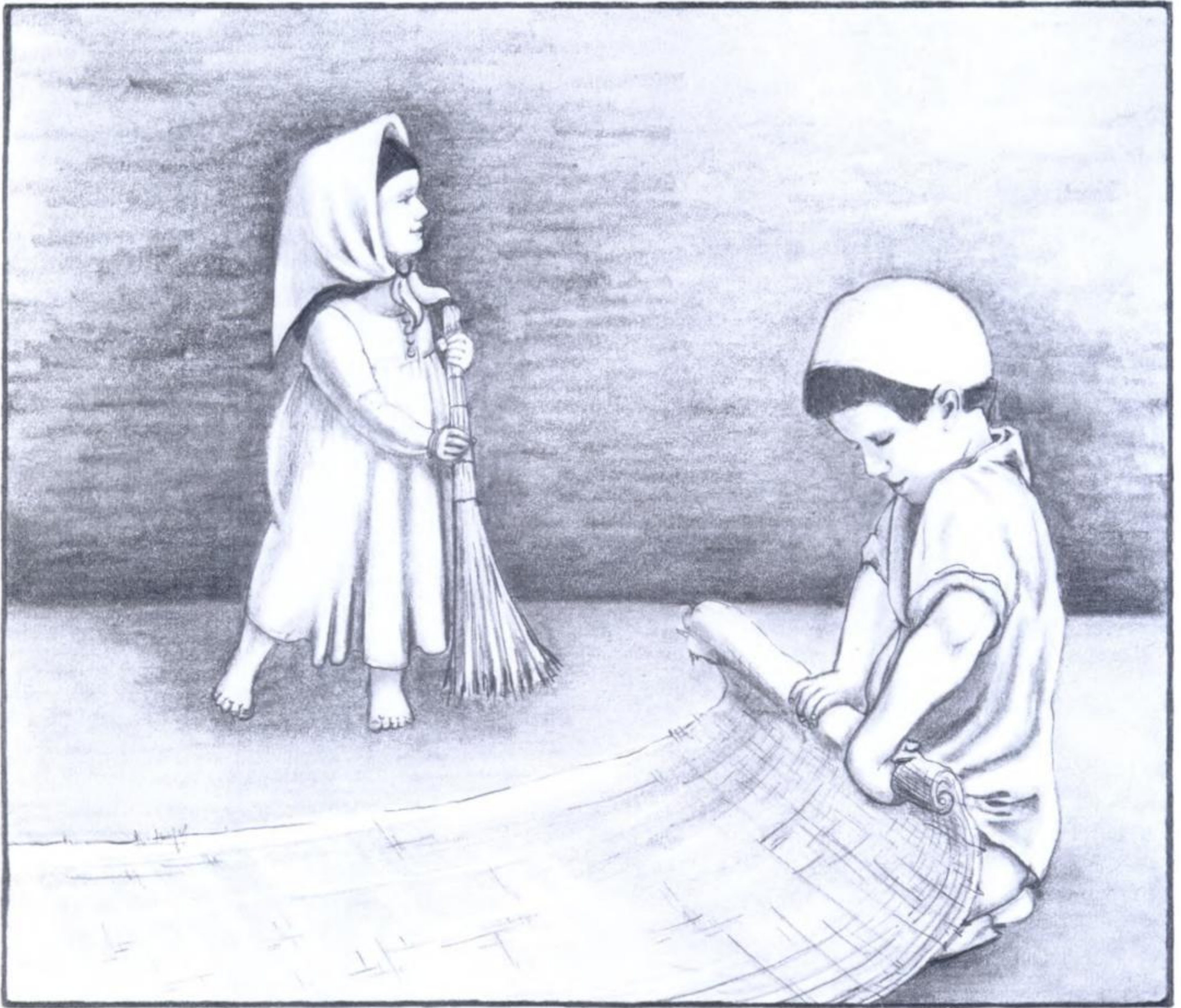
Once upon a time there was a very poor family. They had three children named Abraham, Isaac, and Fatima.

The parents had many troubles. Neither the mother nor the father could find full-time jobs, so they had to take every small job that came their way, no matter how difficult. Each evening, they bought a little food with the money they made that day and cooked a simple meal for the children. Even though they earned barely enough money to support the family from day to day, they accepted this patiently and worked very hard without complaining.

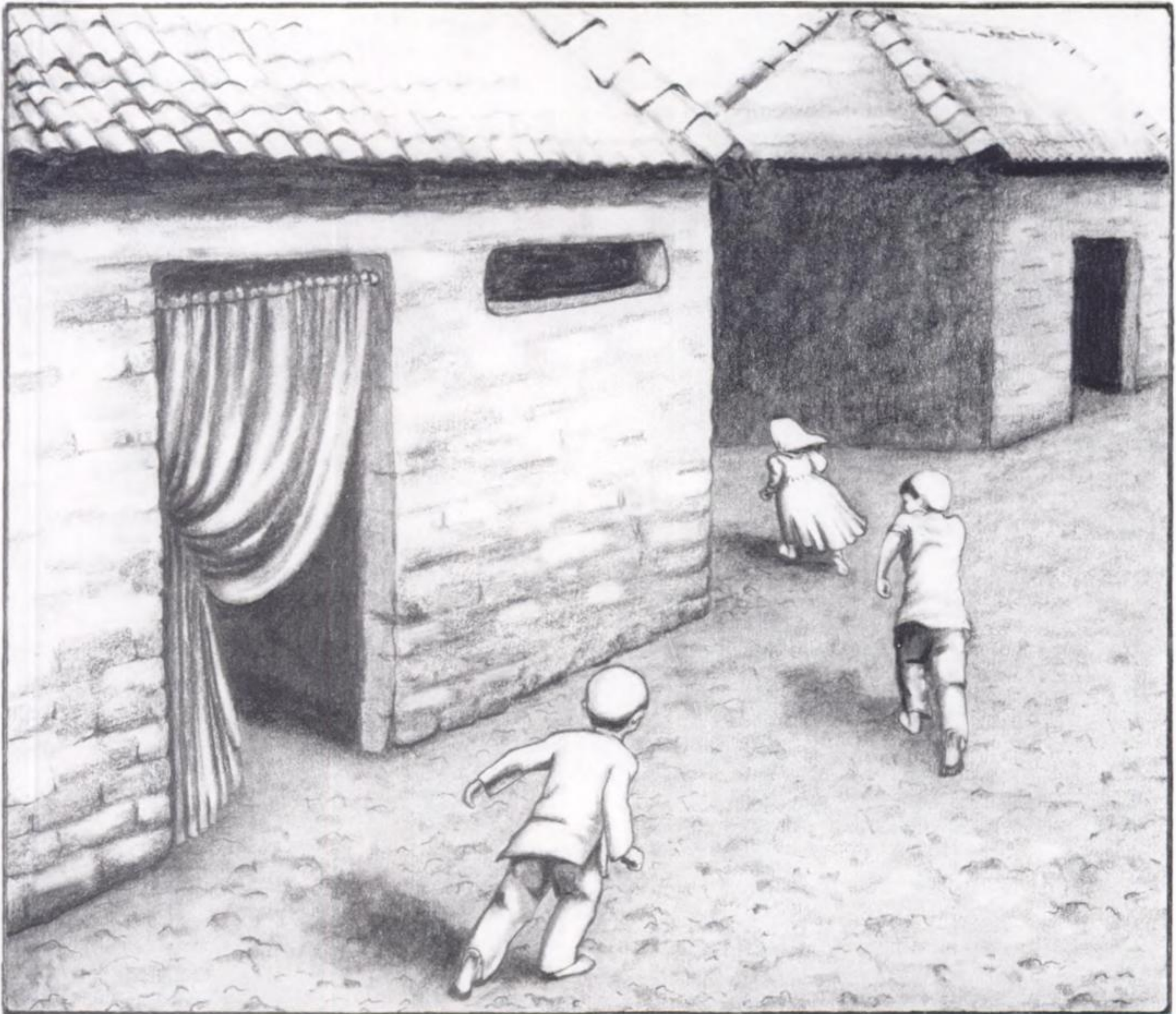
One day before work, the mother carefully put aside a portion of rice for each child's lunch. She put a little bit on the plate for baby Fatima, slightly more for the middle brother, Isaac, and still more for the big brother, Abraham.

"Take good care of each other while I'm gone," she said. "I'll return in a few hours." Then she kissed the children goodbye and left.





The children worked and played happily for a few hours. They rolled up their sleeping mats and swept the hard dirt floor. Then they went outside and chased each other around and around the house, until they all fell down, breathless.



“Let’s get something to eat,” gasped Fatima.

“Yes, I’m really hungry,” said Isaac.

They ran into the house and picked up their plates of food.
Abraham started to eat his rice.

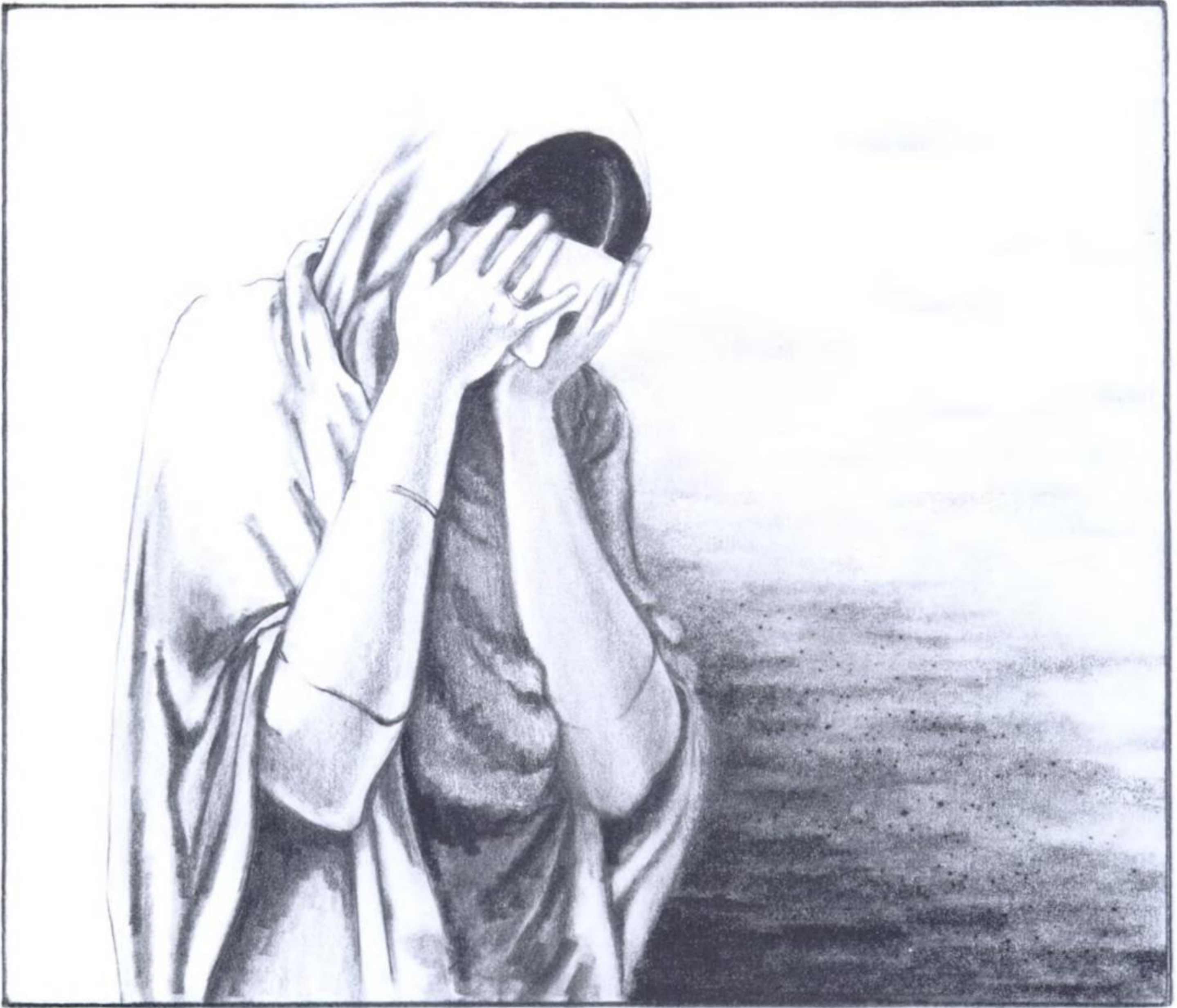


“You have more food than I have,” complained Isaaq to his older brother.

“That’s because I’m the biggest,” said Abraham, puffing out his chest.

“You both have more than I do. It’s not fair!” said baby Fatima, and she began to cry.

Isaac and Fatima both tried to grab Abraham’s plate because it had the most rice, and Abraham pushed them away. As they wrestled, their plates crashed to the ground and broke. The rice scattered all over the dirt floor. The whole room was a mess, and there wasn’t any clean food left to eat. When the children realized they had destroyed their only dishes and had no food, they were so upset that they could only sit and cry.



Some time later, their mother came home to check on the children. When she saw the broken dishes and wasted food, her heart sank and she, too, began to cry.

“Children, I have nothing left to give you for lunch,” she sobbed, “and we won’t have any money to buy more food until late tonight. I’m very sorry, but it looks as if you will have to suffer the consequences of what you have done.”



There was nothing she could do but dry her eyes and clean up the mess. "I have to return to work now," she said as she left.

As soon as she had gone, the children heard a deep rumbling from inside the garbage can where their mother had thrown the shattered plates and wasted rice. It became louder and louder, and finally the can began to shake and clatter.

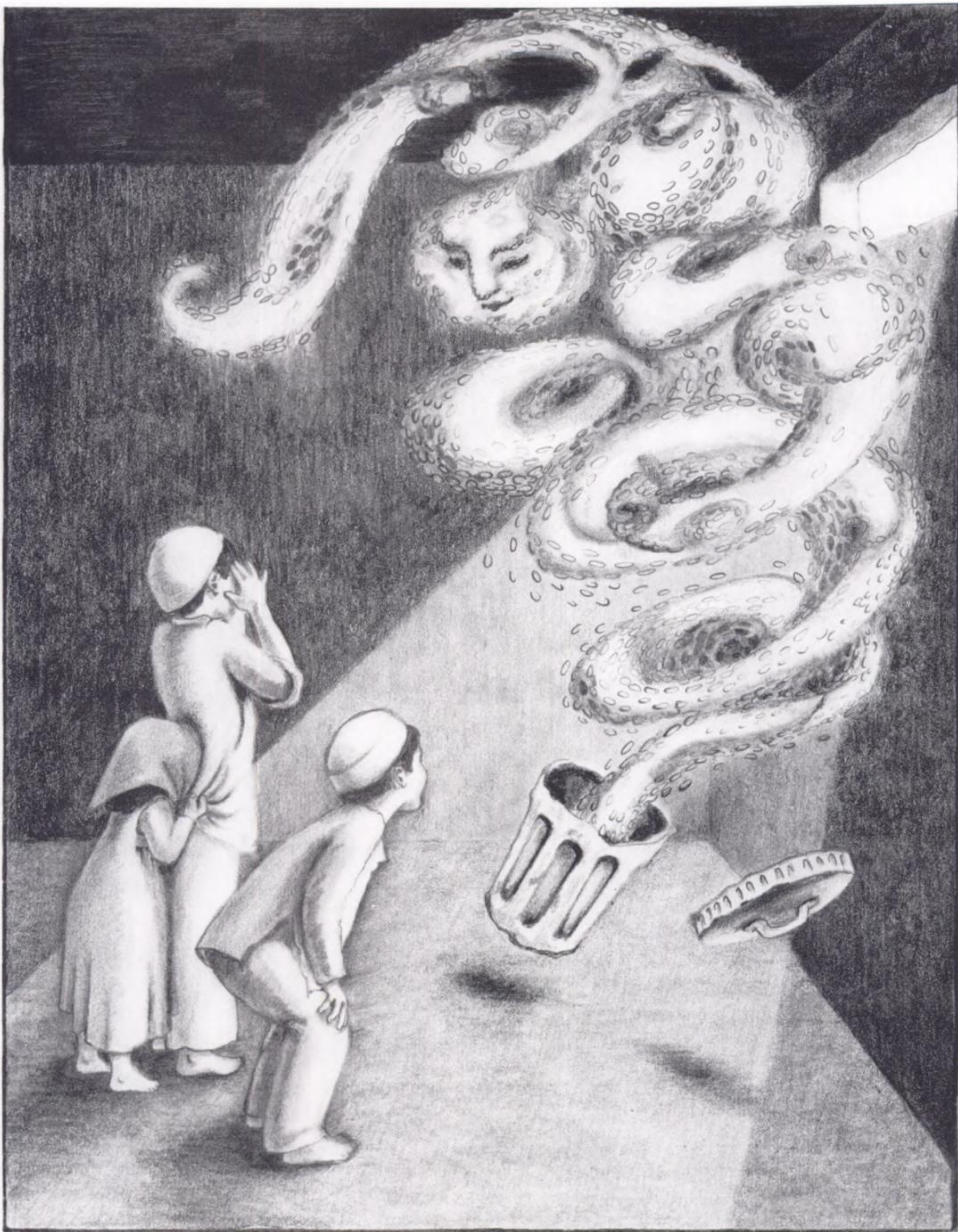
“What’s that noise?” asked Isaac.

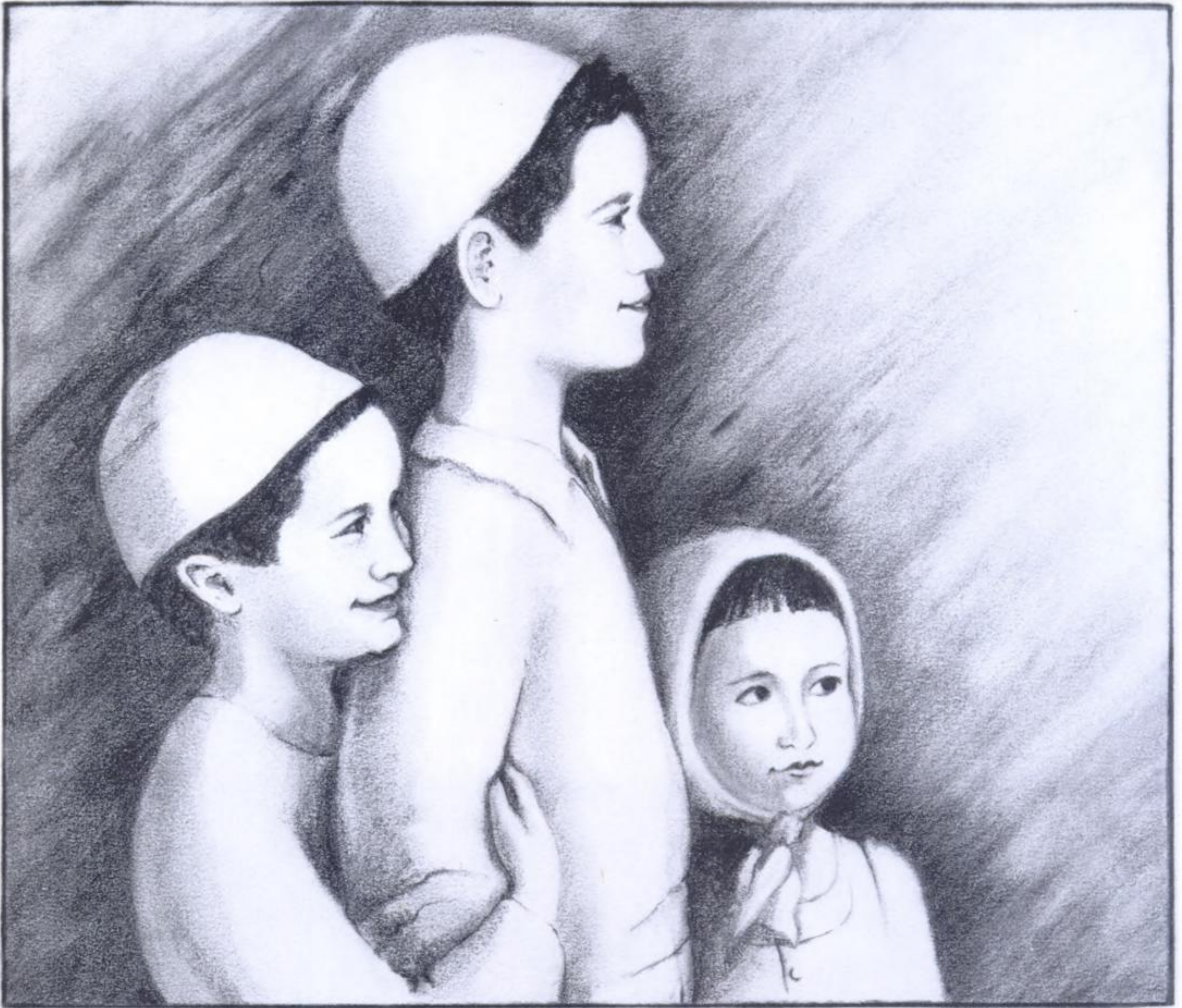
“It’s the rice!” cried Abraham. “It’s coming to life!”

The children could hardly believe their eyes. They watched in amazement as the rice rose up out of the can and started to speak!

“Children! Now you will have to go hungry! Once you feel that hunger, maybe you will understand the difficulties your parents are having. They both worked hard for many hours to buy dishes and food for you. But in just a few minutes you broke the dishes and ruined the food!

“Now what are your parents going to do?” asked the rice. “They have no money to buy new dishes, and they can’t buy food for you until late tonight. Do you see how difficult it is for them to take care of you and your home? You have caused great suffering to your parents, as well as to your own lives and stomachs.”





“We’re really sorry,” said Abraham. “We weren’t thinking about what we were doing.”

“Well, you must think! You should think about God and why He created me,” said the rice. “God created me as



'Anna Muhammad'. That means He has given me the grace to relieve hunger, to ease tiredness and exhaustion, and to give peace to all lives. God sent me to provide food and nourishment for you, to make your bodies grow big and strong, and to give you peace. That is the grace of God.



“God has said, ‘I understand the needs of every one of My creations, and I provide for them accordingly.’ He knows how much food each stomach needs and gives the right amount.”

“That’s what my mommy does, too,” said little Fatima.

“That’s right, child. Your mother has done the same thing,” explained the rice. “She served a little rice to the youngest child, a little more to the middle child, and even more to the oldest child. She did this correctly, according to the justice of God.

“But what have you done? You started fighting, saying, ‘You have more. I have less. I want this. I want that.’ Now you have broken and spoiled everything. This makes God very unhappy.”

“We didn’t mean to break anything,” said Isaac. “We just got upset because we all had different amounts.”

“Everything has a limit. The elements of earth, fire, water, air, and ether all have a limit,” explained the rice. “Therefore, each person must accept what has been given to him, according to his limit. When you get something to eat, you should feel happy with the share that God has given you. Accept it with respect for God and good qualities and humbly say, ‘All praise is to God. *Al-hamdu lillāh!* O God, this is enough.’

“Before you eat, you must focus your intention on God. Praise Him and pray to Him,” advised the rice. “If you had done that, you would have been satisfied with your share. But you forgot God and destroyed your food, and that is the same as hurting God. That is not good, is it?

“God has said, ‘If you waste your food once, I will reduce your share seven times.’ Children, God is keeping a certain amount of food for your lives. If you waste part of what He is keeping for you and He reduces your share because of your wasteful actions, then you might not have enough food for your lives and your lives might be shortened. Then you won’t have enough time in the world to learn all the lessons you need in order to receive the wealth of God.”

“O Rice, what we did was wrong,” said Fatima. “Please forgive us.”

“Children, you must ask for forgiveness from God and from your parents. You must say, ‘O God, what I did was wrong, please forgive me. I won’t do it again. In the future, whether I drink water or eat food, I will think of You and say, “In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Compassionate. *Bismillāhir-Rahmānir-Rahīm.*”’”

“Right,” said Isaac. “And we will be thankful for the share God has given us and say, ‘All praise belongs to God. *Al-hamdu lillāh!*’”

“That will be very good, children,” said the rice.

With that final word, the rice fell back into the can, separated into a thousand tiny grains, and was never heard from again.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ



Like that, my grandchildren, you must never waste food. Be aware of the state of your parents and think about how hard it is for them to earn money to take care of you. Of course, you should never waste any food even if you are very rich. Eat according to your proper limit and then carefully save what is left over.

Another thing, children. Don't eat like an animal, mixing all your food together. Eat nicely, little by little, from one side of the plate. Keep the other side clean and untouched so that if a hungry child comes along you can say, "Come and eat with me." Then give him food from the untouched portion.



Also, if someone leaves a cup or plate outside, a wise child will pick it up, take it inside, wash it, and put it back in the cupboard carefully. Don't ever ruin the belongings of another. You must not steal, tell lies, or take revenge on another. Instead, be a wise child. Take care of your belongings and never forget to do your duties. Always help your parents and try to give them peace. This is what a good child of wisdom will do.

Children, you must try to grow up with good behavior, good thoughts, respect, and dignity. Everything in life is a lesson for you. If you study and learn in the right way, then good qualities will grow in you and you will develop well. Do you understand, my granddaughters and grandsons? Think about this.

My love you.





The Wise Apple Tree

My love you, my grandchildren. I have a little story to tell you. Please listen carefully.

Once upon a time some children were playing in the apple orchard their parents had planted. They rolled and romped in the tall grass and played hide-and-go-seek behind the trees.



After a while, they grew tired of these games and started climbing the trees. They plucked some of the small flowers and unripe fruits and threw them on the ground. Then they hung from the branches, swinging wildly back and forth.

This was too much for the tree's limbs, and they began to groan and crack. Then the branches of one old apple tree broke right off in the children's hands. The damaged tree shuddered from the base of its roots to the tips of its leaves. All of a sudden it wailed, "Children, please don't do that. You're hurting me!"



The children were so amazed to hear a tree talking that they all jumped down from their branches and stood very still.

“My little brothers and sisters, pay attention,” the apple tree said. “Your parents worked very hard to plant me and make me grow. Do you know why they did this?”

“Of course,” answered Mary, one of the children who had been plucking the fruit. “They wanted to grow apples for everyone to eat!”

“That’s right,” said the tree. “So instead of hurting me, why don’t you help your parents take care of me? If you protect me and make sure that nothing comes to harm me, my fruits will grow bigger and bigger. Then when they ripen and become rosy-red, you can eat them. They will quench your thirst and make you so healthy that you won’t need any medicine.

APPLES



“Apples contain many things which are very good for your body,” the tree explained. “Apples help the heart, brain, and eyes to work properly. If you eat them, you won’t have stomach aches or diarrhea, and you won’t get sick from having too much sugar in your body. Apples clean your blood. They are good for all lives. Your parents can even earn money by selling my apples.”

“We’re very sorry,” said Kareem, who had swung on the branches. All the children nodded their heads and asked the old tree to forgive them.



“All right, children,” said the apple tree. “Don’t ever hurt me again by breaking my branches or throwing away my fruits. If you do, your body and your life will suffer. You will also be hurting all the other people who could have eaten my apples and made their bodies stronger.”

“We were just playing. We weren’t thinking about what we were doing to you,” Mary confessed.

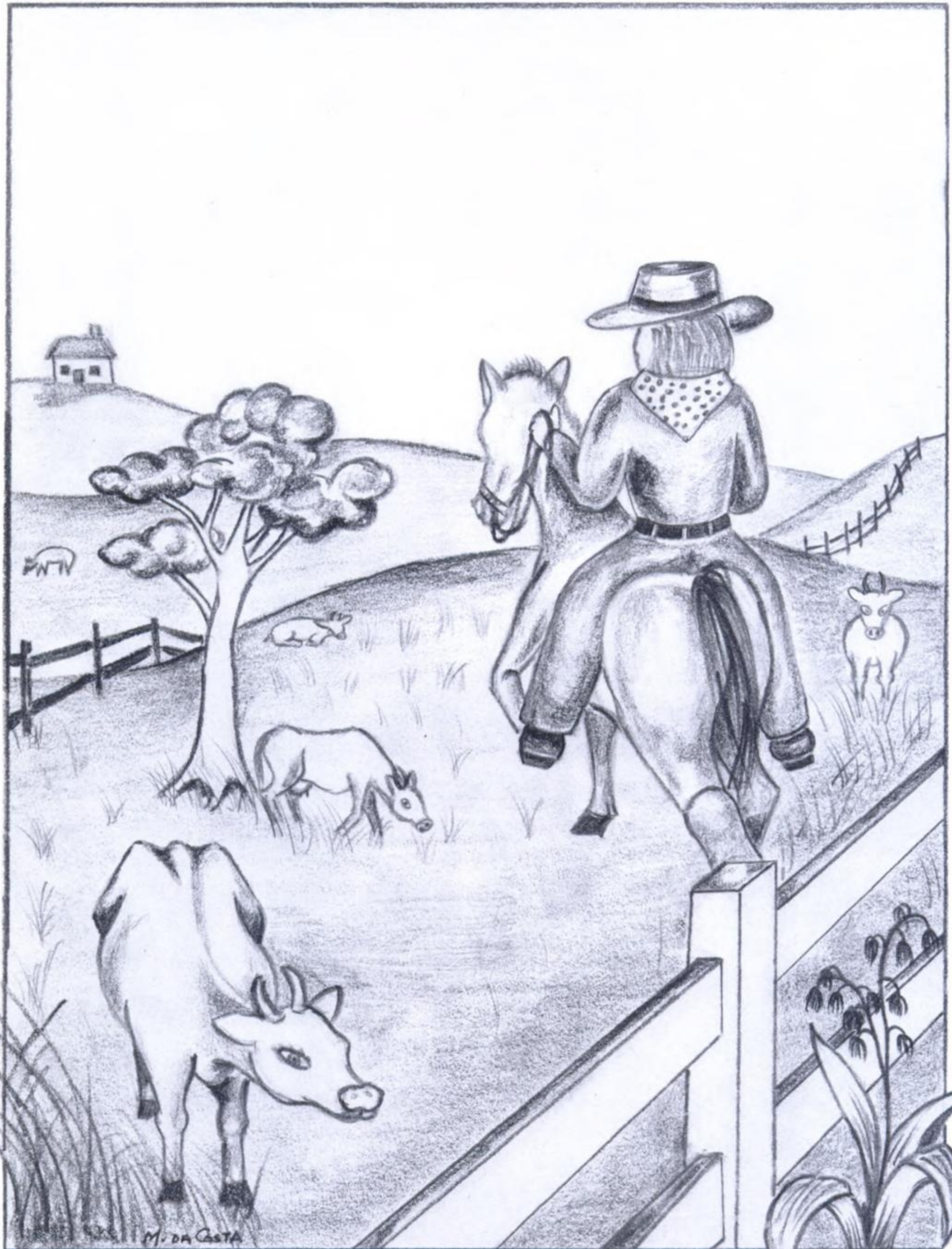
“Or how we were really hurting our parents and ourselves,” Jonah agreed.

“Please children,” begged the apple tree, “use your wisdom and take care of the things that will help you later on. Don’t ever waste anything again.”

The children vowed to be careful from now on and happily went back to playing games that would not hurt the trees.

My grandbaby children, my love you. Please think about this story and the point within it. You must never hurt or destroy anything, because if you do, you are really hurting yourselves and ruining your wisdom. Therefore, before you do anything, think about what the results of your actions will be. If you are not sure of what will happen, ask your parents and learn from them. That will be good.

My love you.





The Peaceful Cows

My precious grandchildren, gems of my eyes, I would like to tell you a story.

Once upon a time a class of girls and boys went with their teacher to visit a ranch. When they arrived they saw a lone cowboy on his horse, looking after a herd of cattle. There were many cows in the herd, grazing in green fields which stretched out as far as the eye could see.

The children watched the cows munching on the meadow grass. They saw huge bulls with long curly horns and fat milk-cows tending their young. There were calves of all sizes, too. The smaller ones on spindly legs stayed close to their mothers. The larger calves romped in the fields, playfully nudging each other with the little horns that were sprouting on their heads. All the different kinds of cows were eating and playing together happily. It was very peaceful in the meadow.

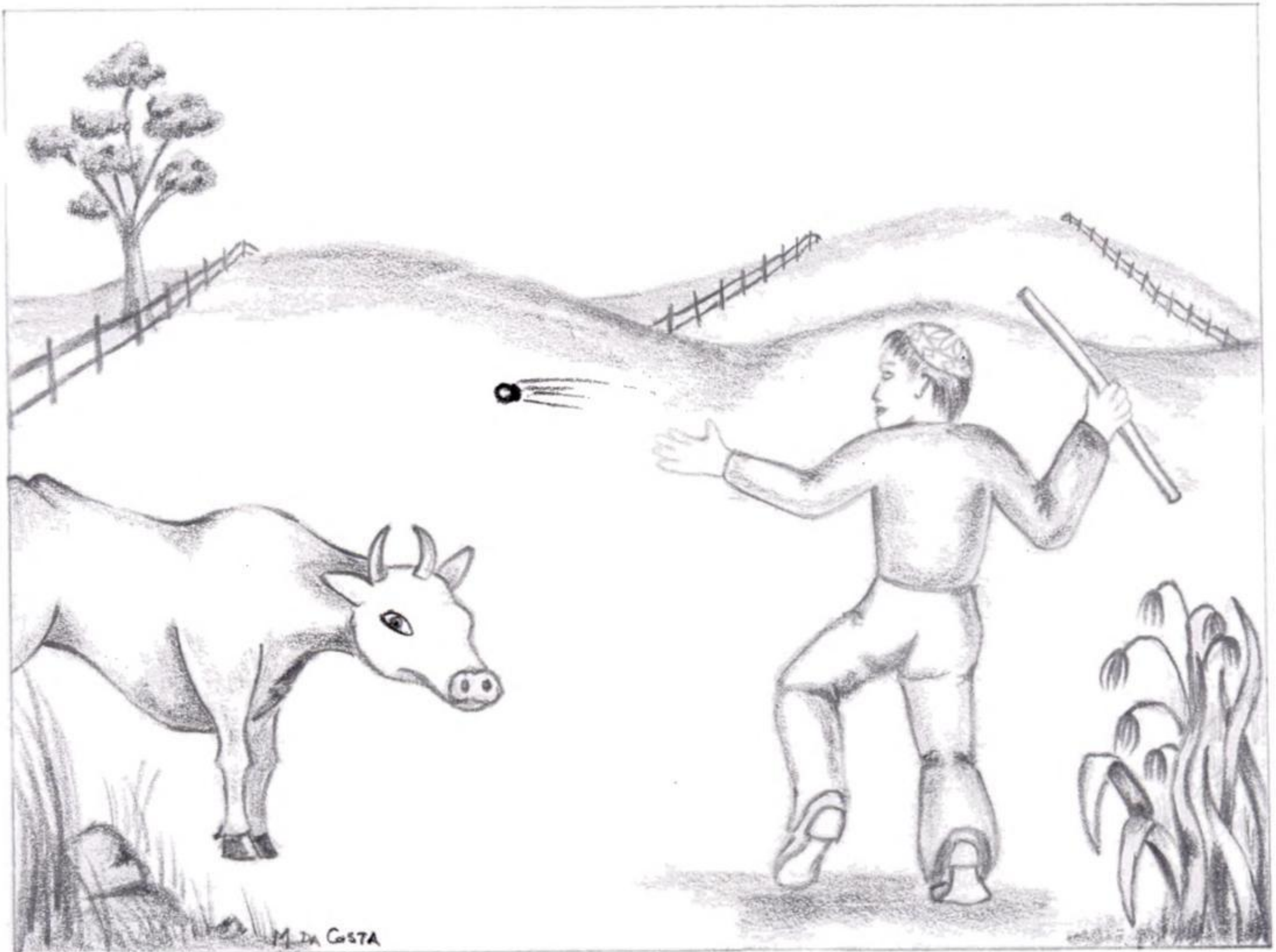


Suddenly the quiet was shattered when some of the children started fighting. They kicked and pinched and bit each other. David, who was a big boy, pushed a smaller child down a hill. Ali hit a younger boy with a stick. Many children were hurt and crying.

The cows were watching all this. They had never seen this kind of behavior before.

“Children! Please don’t fight!” their teacher lovingly pleaded.

“Leave us alone,” the boys shouted. They pushed her and ran away. Ali angrily picked up a stone and threw it into the herd. It whizzed through the air and hit one of the cows. KA-THUMP!





The cow that was hit by the stone turned slowly and looked at the children.

“Mmmmmmmooo!” she said. “Children, come here! We cows belong to the family of animals,” she explained, “and you belong to the family of human beings. We have huge bodies and sharp horns on our heads. We have four strong legs. Just imagine how much damage we could do with our strength and our deadly horns if we acted like you! Just think how much we would hurt each other! But we don’t fight. Even though we are so large and powerful, we don’t use our size and strength against each other.

“Instead, the whole herd of one thousand cows is controlled by one cowboy. We always obey his rules and therefore we live in peace and unity.



“We graze and eat grass in the meadow side by side. We bathe and drink water in the stream together, as one family. Even though we were only born as cows, we live together peacefully. You were born as human beings, so shouldn’t you behave at least as well as we do?”

“Yes,” the children said, nodding their heads.

“Look at our children,” said the cow. “See how the older calves protect the younger ones? They would never push or hit a smaller one like you did. Now, you tried to push a child down the hill. If he had fallen he might have been seriously hurt or he might have even died. Then you would have lost a brother, and you would have caused pain to so many other people who loved that boy.

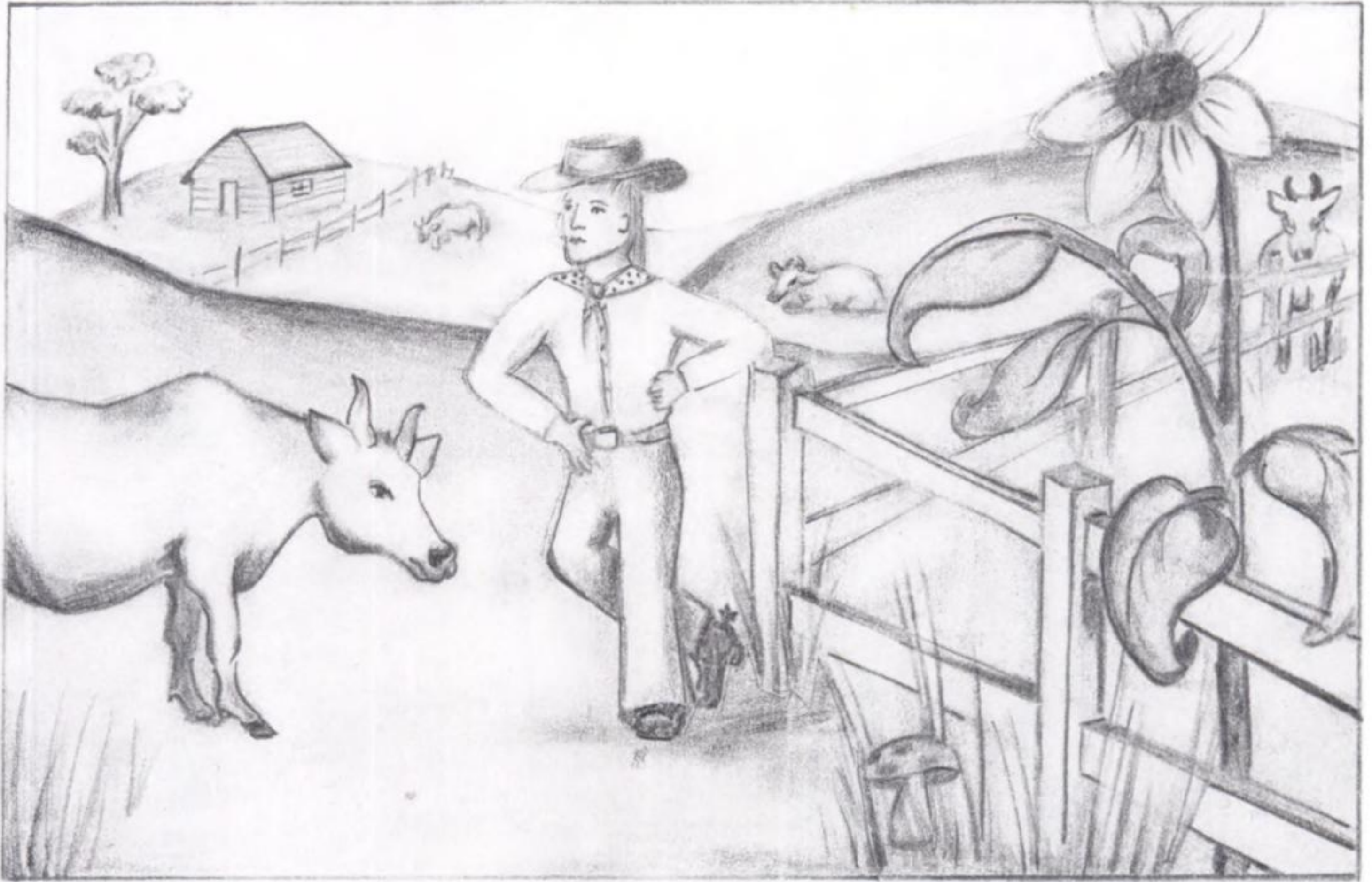
“Our children are only animals, but they take care of each other. The older calves protect the younger ones. You are human beings. Shouldn’t you take care of each other at least as well as cows do?”

“I’m sorry,” said Ali quietly. “I’ll try to be better from now on.”

“That’s good,” said the cow. “You must grow in patience. Don’t ever get angry and hurt your younger brothers and sisters. Instead, you must live in unity as we live in unity. See how we grown-up cows respect and obey the cowboy? We all follow his rules and are united under him. Then we teach our children in our own language, and they respect and obey us. That is how so many cows are able to live together in peace even though there is only one cowboy to take care of us.

“You children should respect your teachers in the same way. And just as our children listen to us and do as we say, you must listen to your parents and obey them. You have to grow up with that kind of love. We are only animals, but you are human beings, so you must live and grow as good human beings. Even if you lose your human qualities, you must at least try to live as well as we four-legged animals.

“From this time forth, understand this and act in a good way. Boys and girls, do you understand?”



“Yes, we do,” said the children. They all gave the cow a big hug, then ran off to tell their teacher what had happened.

My children, please think about what the cow said, and act with the good qualities of a human being.

My love you.





The Rose of the Heart

My love you, my grandchildren. One spring day a teacher took her little students on a trip to a garden. Beautiful flowers of every kind were blooming there. Birds, butterflies, and bees came from afar, drawn by the sweet scents of rose and jasmine which filled the warm air.

The children all agreed that it was the most wonderful place they had ever seen. They skipped from flower to flower, trying to decide which had the nicest fragrance.



When the teacher wasn't looking, two of the children, Deen and Halima, ran to the prettiest rose bush and yanked off some roses. They pressed the flowers to their noses and crushed them in their hands.

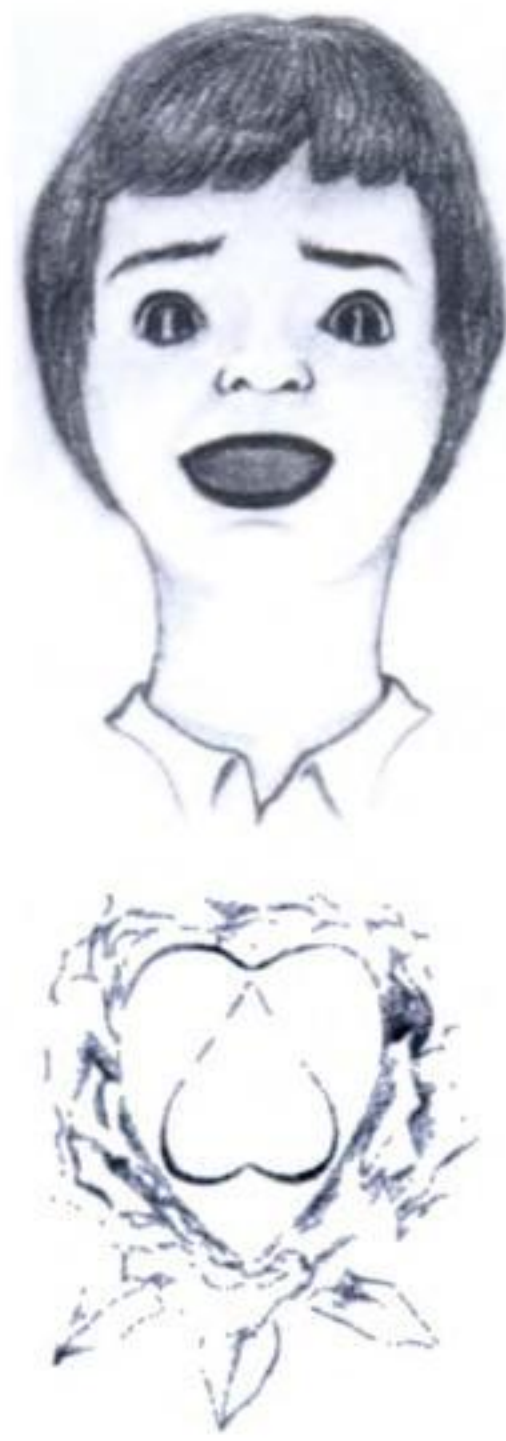
Suddenly one of the roses cried out, "Children, stop!"

Deen and Halima looked at the rose in surprise. They had never heard of a talking flower!





“Please don’t hurt me,” said the rose. “We’re alike in so many ways. You are little children, and I’m a little flower. You have parents to take care of you and help you grow, and I have a gardener to take care of me and help me grow. Everyone wants to pick you up to hug and kiss you, and everyone wants to pick me up to touch and smell me. People think I am precious. They wear me in their hair and on their coat lapels.



“God created me as a flower with a beautiful color and a sweet fragrance. Because of these qualities, everyone likes me. If you destroy something everyone likes, then everyone will feel its loss. Is that the correct thing to do? You must think a little. When you hurt me you also cause hurt to the gardener, to your teacher, and to everyone who loves me. You should never do this.

“Children, God also created a beautiful and sweet smelling rose within you. Do you know what that flower is? It’s your heart! It is very beautiful. It has original beauty. Please don’t crush that heart-flower like you crushed me. Take good care of it, then you will have the original fragrance and beauty which everyone will like.

“How can we take care of a heart-flower?” asked Halima.

“The gardener takes care of me by lovingly pouring fertilizer on me to make me grow,” said the rose. “Your heart-flower also needs something to make it grow. But it needs a different type of fertilizer, one that is made from good qualities, good thoughts, and good actions.



“Therefore, you must develop good qualities such as patience, inner patience, compassion, and love. You should care about the lives of other people the same way that you care about your own life. You should feel the hunger of other people as you feel your own hunger. Use these loving qualities as fertilizer to make your heart grow and blossom like a flower.

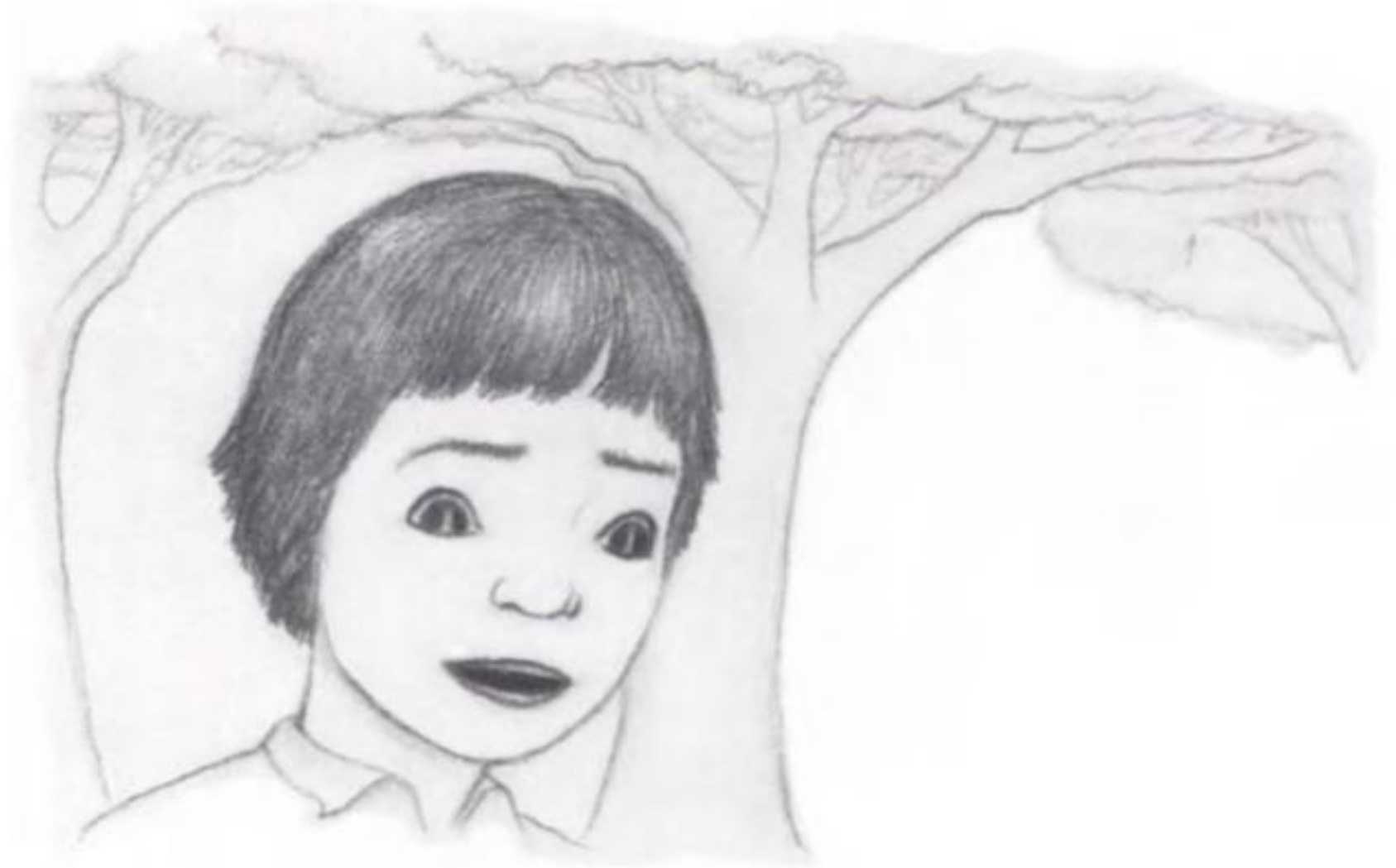


“Children, I was growing happily just like you,” the rose continued. “Then you thoughtlessly plucked me from the bush, so now I will never be able to grow up. But you still have a flower growing in your heart. Please take good care of it. Don’t act carelessly and ruin the beauty and fragrance of that flower the way you ruined me. For if you destroy the flower of your heart, it will hurt God, the angels, and the prophets. It could also make it hard for you to reach paradise.

“Children, you must take good care of valuable things. If you destroy the beauty and fragrance that is in your heart-flower, your life will be sad and full of troubles. But if you act with good qualities and make your heart-flower grow with love, grace, wisdom, and patience, then it will blossom, and you will be filled with peace and contentment.”

Halima and Deen felt very sorry that they hurt the baby rose flower.

“We will never crush a flower again,” Deen promised.



“We will take good care of our heart-flowers, too!” said Halima.



“And we will
grow them
with love,
with wisdom,
and with
good qualities.”



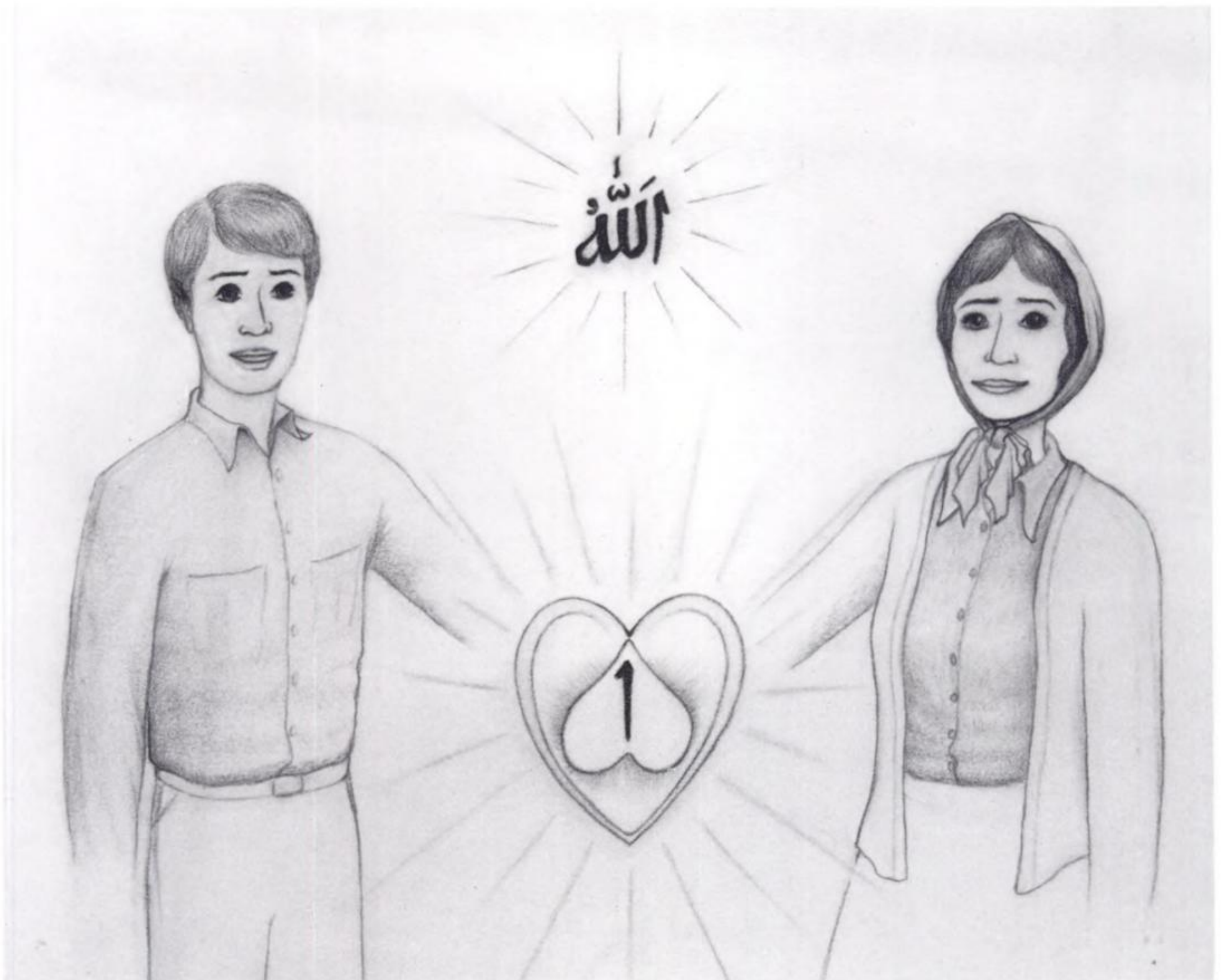
“Very good,” said the rose. “That will bring great happiness to you and to all those around you.”



Deen and Halima kissed the rose goodbye, and lovingly placed it in the water of a nearby pond. Then they joined their friends for a picnic under some shady trees.

The two children never forgot what happened that day or the words of wisdom that the little rose spoke to them. And when they were all grown up, Deen and Halima were loved by everyone for their beautiful rose gardens and their kind and compassionate hearts.

My precious grandchildren, my love you. God's grace and justice are the rose flower. Good duty and good actions are the beauty. Good qualities are the fragrance. Think about what the rose said and grow the rose flower of your heart carefully with love and grace, with wisdom, patience, and good qualities. That will be very good. My love you.



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The central branch of the Bawa Muhaiyaddeen Fellowship is located in Philadelphia, PA. The Fellowship serves as a meeting house and as a reservoir of people and materials for all who are interested in the teachings of Bawa Muhaiyaddeen.

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